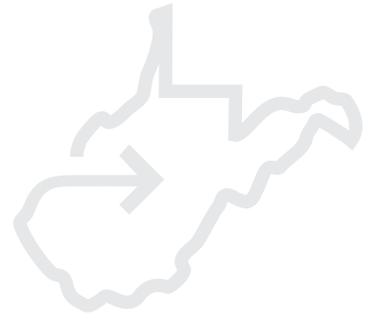




WEST VIRGINIA FORWARD



WHAT IS WEST VIRGINIA FORWARD?

West Virginia Forward is a collaboration among West Virginia University, the West Virginia Department of Commerce and Marshall University to identify short-term, larger-scale projects that will boost West Virginia's economic development efforts. The collaboration was supported by analysis from McKinsey & Company, which was focused on how West Virginia's assets may be aligned with trending business sectors to provide potential avenues for job growth and economic stability.

WHY IS WEST VIRGINIA FORWARD IMPORTANT?

The state is in a transition economy. Our communities are struggling while jobs have disappeared. Our talent has been forced to leave the state they love to pursue opportunity. We need to embrace all the opportunities West Virginia has to offer and believe that we can create a new path forward. It is not about rising from the bottom of a poll or stat. It's about moving West Virginia Forward.

WHY WAS MCKINSEY & COMPANY CHOSEN TO DO THE ANALYSIS?

McKinsey & Company is a global management consulting firm that serves leading businesses, governments, non-governmental organizations, and not-for-profits. We worked with McKinsey due to their expertise and success in providing the critical information organizations need to create change.

WHO ARE THE OTHER PARTNERS INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT?

For the past several months, there have been working groups with staff from West Virginia University, the Department of Commerce and McKinsey. In addition, we have met with lawmakers, economic development experts, community leaders, educators, business owners, the Chamber of Commerce, the National Guard, Vision Shared, Imagine, the Business Roundtable, Tech Connect, Discover the Real West Virginia Foundation and others to begin the process of soliciting feedback from stakeholders across the State.

WHAT AREAS OF GROWTH ARE BEING CONSIDERED?

While all possibilities are being considered, a few key opportunities include workforce, business climate, entrepreneurship and infrastructure. In the past, the State and other organizations have addressed specific

areas of concern. However, this collaborative partnership aims to look at West Virginia's assets from a global perspective and pair them with economic trends we can leverage for future growth.

HOW WILL THIS BE DIFFERENT THAN OTHER REPORTS THE STATE HAS DONE?

The Summary of Findings will be specific for West Virginia and our current economic landscape, and it will address implementation. It will be aspirational but realistic, and there are no other reports like it in the region. The state has phenomenal assets, such as energy, healthcare and its people. But we need to take stock of our economic assets, understand what business sectors are most likely to grow in the coming years and then determine if we have the right attributes to attract them here.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Next steps include asking each partner to undertake projects to implement these recommendations. West Virginia University, the Commerce Department and Marshall University are entering into a Memorandum of Understanding that formalizes the partnership through commitments from each, outlining specific actions and dedicating resources. The partners have been in preliminary discussions and implementation meetings have begun in September. Then work will begin to address the recommendations in cooperation with subject matter experts around the state and region.

HOW MUCH IS THIS COSTING TAXPAYERS?

Nothing. The research and summary was paid through the support of private donors and foundations.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

It is vital that every West Virginian get involved. And there are many opportunities at the community, state and regional levels. If you would like to volunteer or have an idea, you can email wvforward@mail.wvu.edu. And stay current with projects and progress at wvforward.wvu.edu.

